

## Staying Ahead of the Game

The transformation to value-based health care, well underway in the acute care sector, represents a fundamental departure from the long-criticized “fee-for-service” payment methodology. Our system is moving to one that balances the quality of patient outcomes with cost-effective delivery. More than ever before, the overarching goal for providers is to improve the value of health care for patients, specifically in terms of clinical outcomes relative to the cost of achieving those outcomes.

This issue of INFUSION magazine focuses on this transformation from a variety of perspectives. NHIA’s Connie Sullivan, RPh, offers an excellent overview of value-based purchasing (VBP), highlighting key components that set this reimbursement model apart from fee-for-service and provides insight on how it builds upon earlier pay-for-performance programs. While we may not fully know what life will look like under VBP, we do know that data is a strategic imperative for our field. In this regard, the home and specialty infusion industry has already taken important steps along this path beginning with the 2009 launch of NHIA’s Industry-Wide Data Initiative. From having no data about the size and scope of the infusion industry to establishing a set of standardized patient outcomes data definitions, our industry has come a long way.

How can NHIA’s data advances benefit you? By incorporating NHIA’s data definitions into your organization’s existing performance improvement activities, you will be better prepared to meet the requirements of commercial payers wanting to benchmark performance for VBP. In a conversation with a handful of early adopters, Jeannie Counce’s article highlights the experiences of these pioneers and their compelling reasons for staying ahead of changes on the horizon.

As an industry, we also want to contribute to improving best practices. In this issue’s continuing education article, Nancy Kramer, RN, BSN, CRNI®, drills down on central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI), explaining how one of NHIA’s new definitions fits in with larger system-wide surveillance efforts aimed at reducing health care-associated infections that can drag down outcomes and increase cost of care.

With an eye to the future and in support of the industry’s data initiative efforts, the newly launched Patient Satisfaction Survey Study being sponsored by the National Home Infusion Foundation will bring together experts from among our community to develop a validated, standardized set of patient satisfaction survey questions for home infusion providers to use in organizational assessment tools. A core, uniform set of survey questions specific to the home infusion industry will facilitate the collection of patient satisfaction data necessary for the shift to VBP, where patient choice will play a greater role. The launch of this project is but one of the ways the Foundation seeks to secure a successful future for the industry. But like any investment, the Foundation requires capital and is currently seeking additional sources of funding.

If we’re to unlock the potential of VBP for communicating our value, accountability must remain a priority. With recent headlines focusing on Medicare fraud, I feel it appropriate to recall the significance of the NHIA *Standards for Ethical Practice*, which reflect the industry’s commitment to delivering safe, high-quality infusion therapy with the highest level of integrity. Each of us has a responsibility for safeguarding the reputation of our industry. To that end, I encourage all members to embrace the Standards and to pledge their full support for all of the principles put forth by the Association when the standards were introduced in 2011.

Health care is ever-changing. And, while many of the advances we see on the horizon have the potential to improve treatment for patients and lower costs, they bring a level of uncertainty that can be unsettling. However, NHIA has been working hard to lay a foundation for demonstrating the relevance of home and specialty infusion therapy in a system awash in change. I believe this issue of INFUSION can help connect the dots between the predominant trends that are coming our way, NHIA’s initiatives, and actions you can take in the field to stay ahead of the game.



*Tyler J. Wilson*